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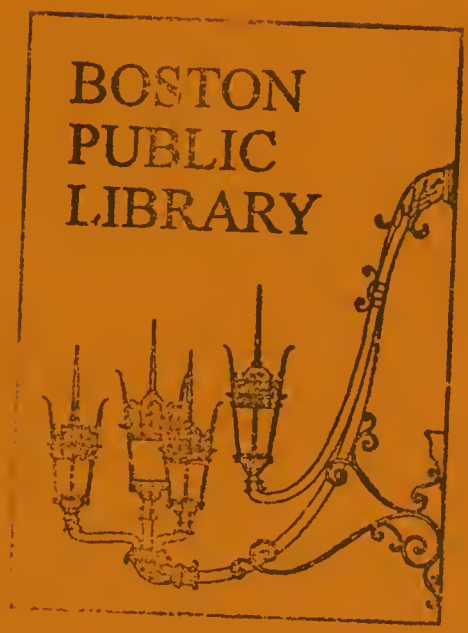
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Library

HIGHLAND PARK



Roxbury
R886

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Highland Park

AND/OR HISTORIC: Roxbury High Fort

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Beech Glen St., Fort Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☐ Building	☒ Public	Public Acquisition:	☐ Occupied	Yes:
☒ Site ☐ Structure	☐ Private	☐ In Process	☐ Unoccupied	☐ Restricted
☐ Object	☐ Both	☐ Being Considered	☒ Preservation work in progress	☒ Unrestricted
				☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☒ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Boston - Parks and Recreation Department

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Boston	Massachusetts	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Registry of Deeds - Suffolk County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Somerset Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Boston	Massachusetts	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: BLC

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969-72 ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☒ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Boston Redevelopment Authority

STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Boston	Massachusetts	

STATE: COUNTY: FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☒ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(If known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

– Highland Park comprises 3.66 acres of open land situated on the crest of a rocky hill in Roxbury, commanding a dramatic view of Boston. The park, bounded by Beech Glen St., Fort Avenue, Fort Ave. Terrace, is an integral part of a residential neighborhood of brick row houses and detached wood structures, where curving streets conform to the hilly topography. Natural outcroppings of puddingstone cover much of the park area, otherwise overgrown with natural grass and weeds. At the highest point a Victorian water standpipe mounted on an earthen platform marks the area of a Revolutionary War fort. Curving walkways lead from three entrances around the park to the standpipe and fort. These walks form a partial circuit, incomplete only on the south where puddingstone formations would interfere with grading or paving. The walks are connected to the top platform by granite steps one flight on each of the southwest and southeast sides and five flights on the northwest. There is a puddingstone embankment on the northeast side of the fort and stairs. A puddingstone retaining wall with one opening forms a boundary along Fort Avenue Terrace to the entrance on Beech Glen Street. At the extension of the line of Glen Fort Avenue Terrace, natural puddingstone formations eliminate the need for a wall.

The fort is a quadrangular earthen platform with bastions at each corner and a concrete paving outline, occupying a quarter of the land area. An 1875-1917 program of restoration and revitalization created a partial reconstruction of the Revolutionary War fort, situated on the highest point of the hill in the northwest corner.

The standpipe, constructed in 1869 as a functional device of Boston's Cochituate Water System, rises from the northeast corner of the fort platform. The exterior standpipe is a brick granite trimmed, circular tower; however, a gabled octagonal base and a gabled octagonal observatory articulate an additional design concept. A gabled attendant's office added to the base in 1907 reinforces the theme. Small lancet-arched windows which are staggered in the outside wall harmonize with the pointed steeple which crowns the observatory. Cast iron finials and spire once graced both the steeple and observatory. Missing also from the latter is an iron balcony added in 1907. Inside the structure an iron pipe five feet in diameter and eighty feet high remains, although no longer containing water. A spiral staircase built within a three foot space between the iron pipe and masonry leads to the lookout.

Of the many commemorative markers placed on the site throughout the years only two remain: a memorial marker on the standpipe lists the brigades of men who were involved with the fort in the Revolutionary War; another memorial marker placed in 1877 indicating the site of the fort stands just off to the north side of the standpipe.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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(Number all entries) 7. Description

To date the most obvious changes to the site and structure have been the result of neglect since the 1930's. Most of the vegetation -- grass, weeds, and a few small trees -- is uncultivated natural growth. The puddingstone retaining walls are basically in good condition, although mortar patchings are necessary in some areas. A few scattered rusty iron bars, remnants of play equipment, pierce the undergrowth. The lines of the reconstructed fort have been obscurred by erosion and growth of grass and weeds. The concrete pavement outline is now cracked and uneven, although slabs of new concrete have been added in a few areas. On the exterior of the standpipe, the brick and mortar have deteriorated; most of the paint has peeled; the roofs are gaping. The standpipe is no longer used as an observation tower; therefore, the entrance is locked, and the windows have been boarded or bricked. In the octagonal base and attendant's office, the pointed arches have been filled with brick, and the entrance arch has been filled to fit a rectangular double door, now boarded. Recently the City removed the hazardous balcony and added six concrete benches and ten globe lamps to accommodate those local residents who still enjoy the park.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☒ 18th Century	☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	☒ 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1775, 1869-70

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Aboriginal	☐ Education	☐ Political	☐ Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric	☐ Engineering	☐ Religion/Philosophy	☒ Other *(Specify)* Topographic
☐ Historic	☐ Industry	☐ Science	
☐ Agriculture	☐ Invention	☐ Sculpture	
☒ Architecture	☒ Landscape Architecture	☐ Social/Humanitarian	
☐ Art	☐ Literature	☐ Theater	
☐ Commerce	☒ Military	☐ Transportation	
☐ Communications	☐ Music		
☐ Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Highland Park's significance is of manifold importance in the topographical, military, architectural, and landscape history of Boston.

The strategic location of the highlands gave it topographical significance. Situated on the top of a hill, the site overlooked the only land route in and out of Boston (along the neck) during the eighteenth century.

Because of this location, Highland Park earned military significance as one of the first sites selected for fortification during the Revolutionary War. Built in the summer of 1775 from the designs of Henry Knox and Josiah Waters (Minuteman Generals), the fort was a quadrangular earthwork about twelve roads square with a bastion at each corner and embankments eight feet to fifteen feet high. Major-General Wm. Heath, a commanding officer in the Roxbury area, mentioned this fort as "being perhaps the first attempt at a regular fortification" (in the colonies). During the seige of Boston, the High Fort was a vital section of the encirclement which prevented the British from receiving supplies and reinforcements and eventually forced their evacuation.

Residents and mayors of Roxbury in the first half of the nineteenth century attempted to preserve High Fort as a Revolutionary landmark. The plans were futile, however, and the fort fell into disrepair.

The architecture prominence of the site was established when it became a part of Boston's Cochituate Water System. Between 1869 and 1870, a year after the annexation of Roxbury to Boston, the old fort was demolished to make way for the construction of a standpipe to provide fresh water for the Roxbury area. Designed by Messrs. Standish and Woodbury to enhance the site, this circular brick tower with its granite trimmings, gabled roofing, and decorative fenestration remains a significant example of Victorian Gothic architecture. Despite the rare qualities of this standpipe in 1880, its functional aspects became obsolete when the city abandonned the Cochituate Water System.

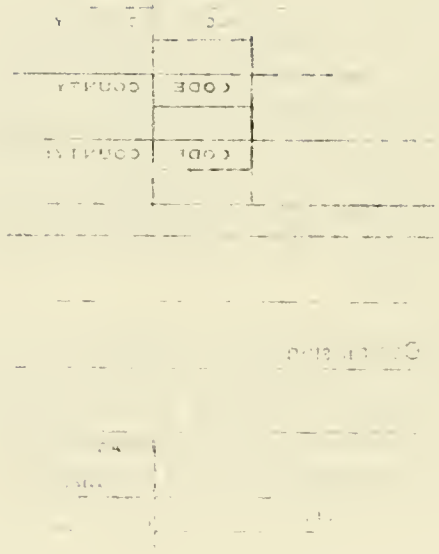
Highland Park had attracted over its first one hundred years a Revolutionary fort and a Victorian standpipe. Each was placed on the crest for its functional topographic advantages; however, the site outlived

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

the usefulness of both architectual monuments. Having been transferred from the city's Water Department to the Park Department the structures and grounds had suffered. In 1895, the site received deserved attention. At that time appropriations were made to restore the well-known tower and its grounds. Under pressure from the Roxbury Military Historical Society (now the Roxbury Historical Society) the Superintendant of the Common and Public Grounds commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted, master landscape architect, to prepare an extensive renovation. Olmsted's involvement extended through his firm until 1916.

The improvements carried out between 1895 and 1916 as a result of Olmsted's proposals included: reconstruction of the quadrangular shape of the fort; creations of walkways and seating arrangements to follow the puddingstone terrain; the planting of appropriate vegetation; construction of a retaining wall on Fort Avenue; and the addition of a battery of four revolutionary cannons and gun carriages. For the standpipe, appropriations included adding an iron balcony, an attendant's office, and bronze memorial plaques. Finally the edge of park was extended approximately 44,000 square feet to the northwest which gave a protective boundary from later neighborhood construction. After the restoration, the park was compared favorably with the Bunker Hill Monument both for historic significance and the pleasurable view of the city. As a result Highland Park once again emerged as an important landmark in the city - this time as significant landscape architecture.

The park today still commands community interest and civic pride, although the problems of the surrounding neighborhoods are great. Development plans for the area recognize the importance of Highland Park as an open space area combining recreational value and visual and historic features linking the community to its past.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bradlee, Nathaniel J. History of the Introduction of Pure Water into the City of Boston with a Description of its Cochituate Water Works, 1868

Drake, Samuel Francis Town of Roxbury 1878

Fitzgerald History of the Water Works 1868-1876 1876

Lossing, Benson J. Field-Book of the American Revolution 1852

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	49 °	9 '	3.8 "	71 °	5 '	42.3
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	42	19	32.7			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Robert Rettig

ORGANIZATION
Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE
January 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE
Massachusetts

CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries) / 9. Bibliography

Olmsted Associates Inc. records, photos, plans, 1895, 1911-1913

Shurcliff, History and Description of Boston Metropolitan Parks 1900

Wheildon, William Paul Revere's Signal Lanterns . . . and the Monument at Highland Park

Winsor, Justin, ed. Memorial History of Boston 4V. 1880

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Highland Park

AND/OR HISTORIC: Roxbury High Fort

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Beech Glen Street, Fort Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:
USGS Boston South, Mass.

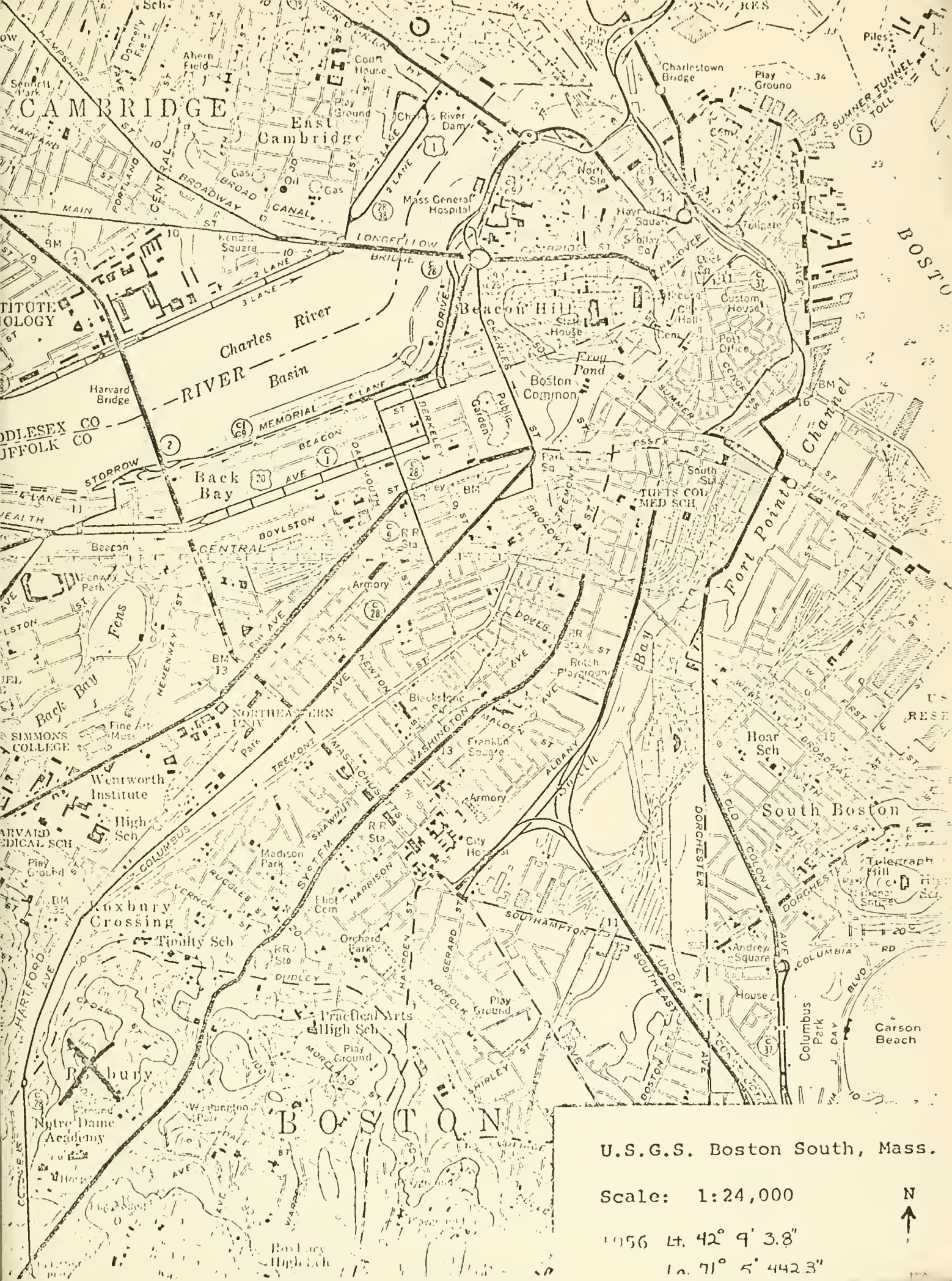
SCALE: 1:24,000

DATE: 1956

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property broundaries where required.
2. North orrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.


CAMBRIDGE
East Cambridge
Charles River
RIVER Basin
Back Bay
Beacon Hill
Boston Common
Frog Pond
Public Garden
Fort Point Channel
South Boston
Roxbury
Roxbury Crossing
BOSTON
Back Bay Fens
Harvard Bridge
Longfellow Bridge
Charlestown Bridge
Mass General Hospital
Tufts Col Med Sch
Wentworth Institute
Simmons College
Northeastern Univ
Boston Latin Sch
Practical Arts High Sch
Notre Dame Academy
Hoar Sch
Andrew Square
Columbus Park
Carson Beach
Telegraph Hill
Orchard Park
Madison Park
Franklin Square
Blackstone
Roch Playground
Armory
Play Ground
Public Garden
Common
Tollgate
Custom House
Old State House
Post Office
Park Sq
South Sta
North Sta
Haymarket Square
Scollay Sq
Dock Sq
Kenmore Square
Central Square
Broadway
Boylston
Beacon
Commonwealth
Memorial
Storrow
Summer
Washington
Tremont
Columbus
Harrison
Shawmut
Albany
Dorchester
Southampton
Dudley
Norfolk
Shirley
Gerard
Hampden
Ruggles
Vernon
Hartford
Morton
Trinity Sch
Old Colony
Dorchester
Columbia
Boston
Southeast
Expressway
Sumner Tunnel
Toll
Charles River Dam
Gas
Oil
Gas
Canal
Broad
Main
Portland
Harvard
Hemenway
Newton
Huntington
Malden
Shawmut
Massachusetts
Tremont
Fenway
Park
Ave
St
Sch
Hosp
Sta
Ground
Field
Square
Bridge
Drive
Channel
Bay
Hill
Pond
Common
Garden
Basin
River
Fens
Crossing
Roxbury
Boston
Back Bay
Beacon Hill
Fort Point Channel
South Boston
Carson Beach
Columbus Park
Andrew Square
Telegraph Hill
Hoar Sch
Tufts Col Med Sch
Wentworth Institute
Simmons College
Northeastern Univ
Boston Latin Sch
Practical Arts High Sch
Notre Dame Academy
Trinity Sch
Roxbury Crossing

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Highland Park

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2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Beech Glen Street, Fort Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: Photogrammetric maps compiled 1962 from ariel photos, Spring, 1961
Fairchild Aerial Survey, Inc., L.A., Calif.

SCALE: 1" - 100'

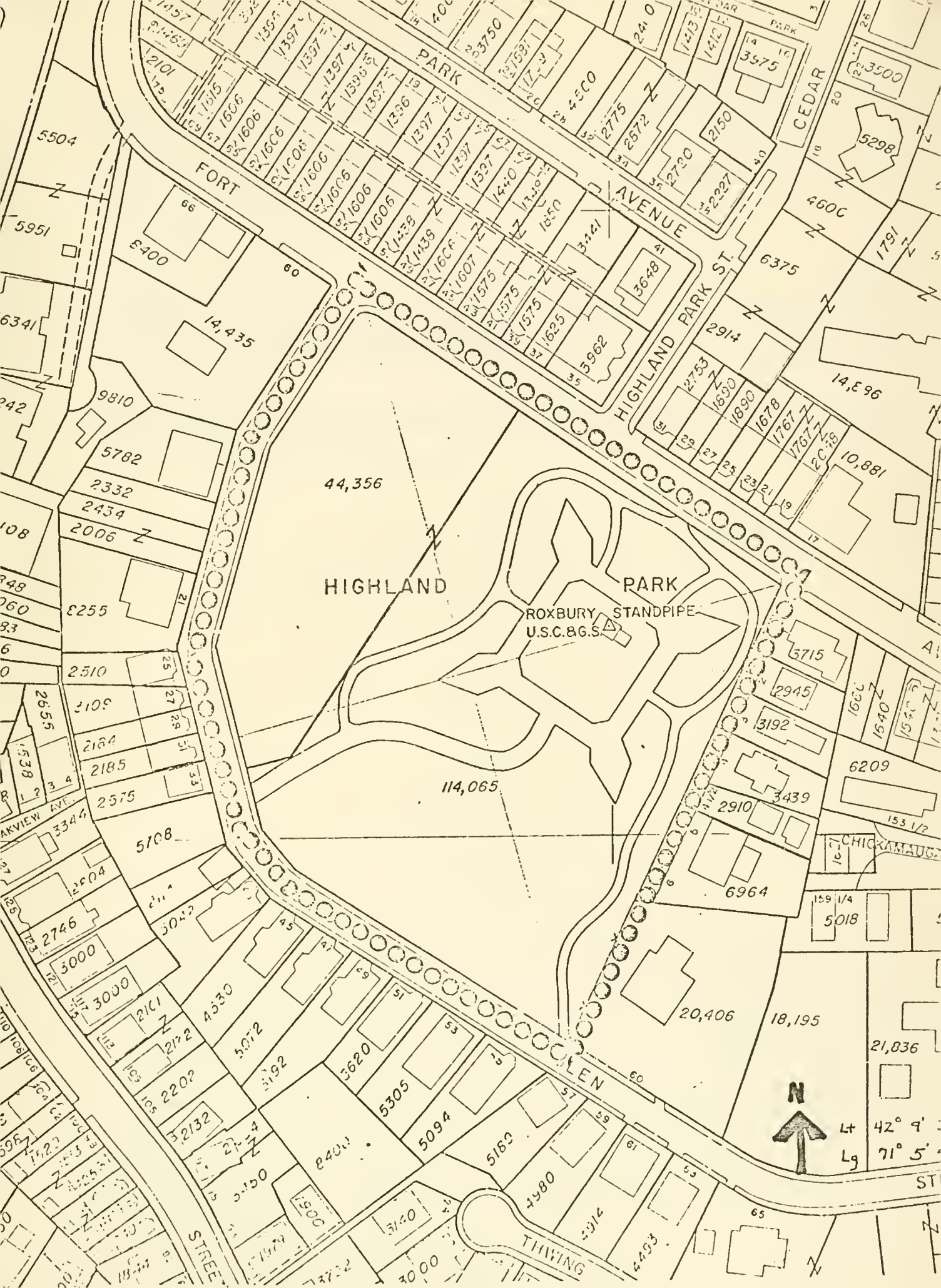
DATE: 1962

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property broundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

HIGHLAND


HIGHLAND PARK
ROXBURY STANDPIPE
U.S.C.&G.S.
44,356
114,065
PARK
FORT AVENUE
HIGHLAND PARK ST.
CEDAR PARK
CHICKAMAUGA
THWING
N
Lt 42° 9'
Lg 71° 5'

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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CITY OR TOWN:
Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: D. Fitzgerald History of Public Water Works

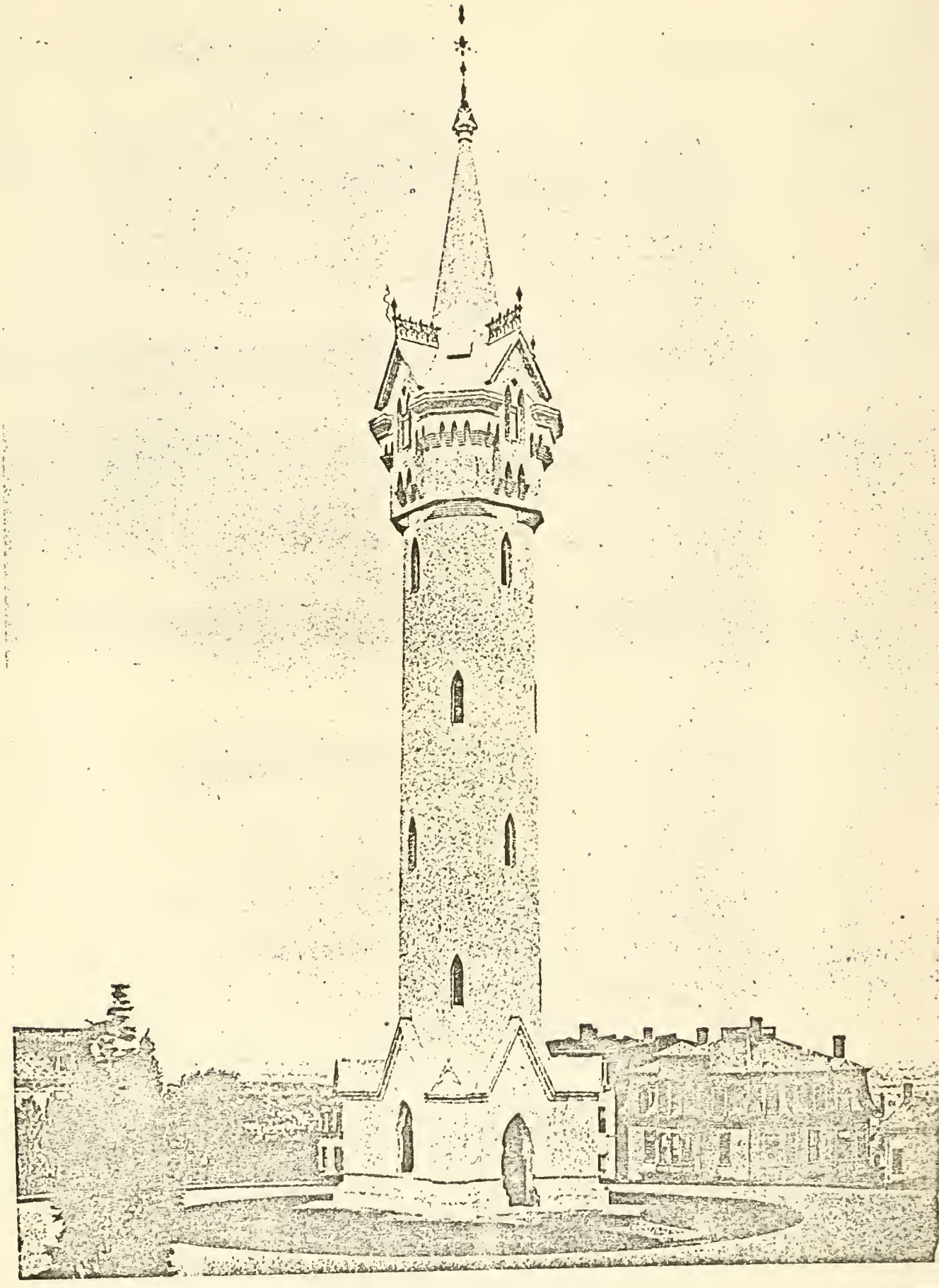
DATE OF PHOTO: 1869

NEGATIVE FILED AT:
?

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

1. View of Standpipe from south looking north



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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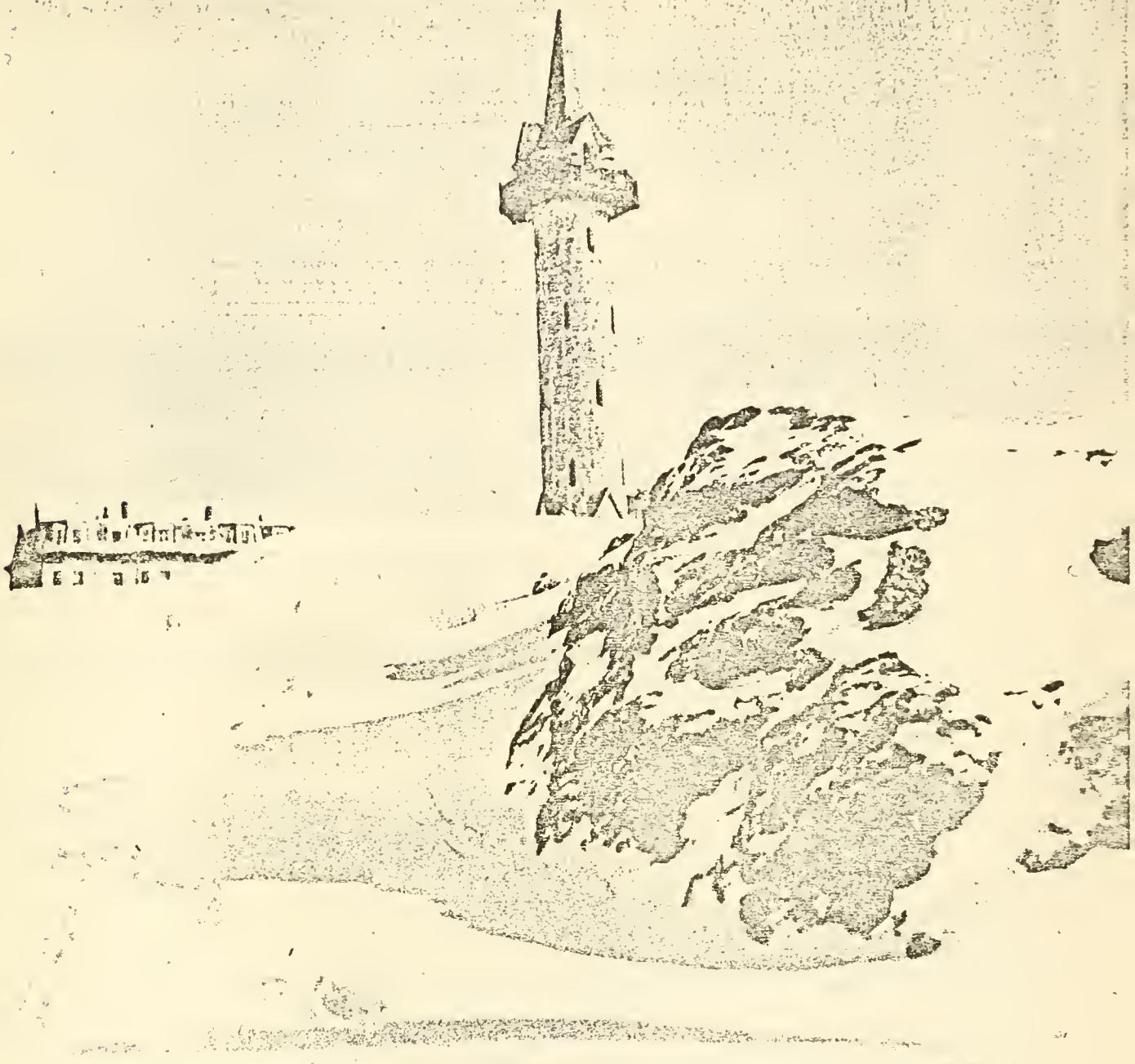
   - COMMON: Highland Park
   - AND/OR HISTORIC: Roxbury High Fort
2. LOCATION
   - STREET AND NUMBER: Beech Glen Street, Fort Avenue
   - CITY OR TOWN: Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   - PHOTO CREDIT: L. Fitzpatrick
   - DATE OF PHOTO: 1968
   - NEGATIVE FILED AT: Boston Redevelopment Authority
4. IDENTIFICATION
   - DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

2. View of standpipe from west looking east



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STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Pierce Pearmain

DATE OF PHOTO: November 1972

NEGATIVE FILED AT:
Boston Redevelopment Authority

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

3. View of standpipe from south looking north

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Massachusetts		Suffolk	

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: P. Pearmain

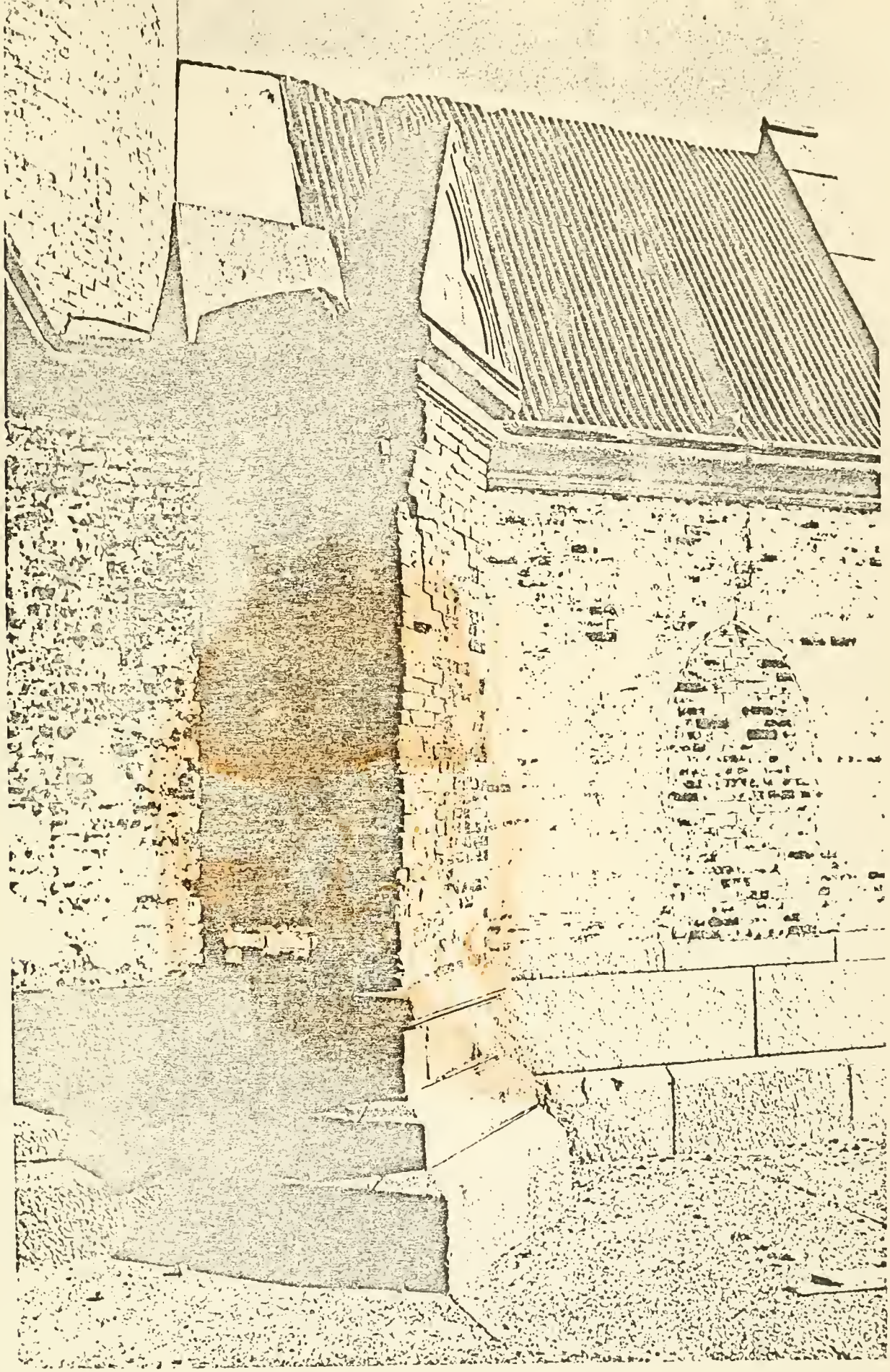
DATE OF PHOTO:

NEGATIVE FILED AT:
Boston Redevelopment Authority

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

4. Detail of southerly buttress of standpipe



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Roxbury
R886

AUTHOR

HIGHLAND PARK

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME